

that fierce and vocal defense, I suggest he step back for just a minute and truly think about and understand what he is defending. Before he accepts every suggestion, every argument of the Corps of Engineers' bureaucracy, I suggest he step back and look at the history of the corps and look at the source he is accepting as gospel truth.

Senator DORGAN mentioned Hurricane Katrina, called it a great natural disaster. It was a great natural disaster, a horrible natural disaster. It was also a horrible manmade disaster because if we want to talk about the greatest damage—not the only damage but the greatest damage—inflicted upon the country from Hurricane Katrina—the flooding of the city of New Orleans—that was manmade by the Corps of Engineers.

That was due directly to the design flaws of the outfall canals in New Orleans by the Corps of Engineers. The Corps of Engineers has admitted this, and we have laid that out in congressional testimony since Katrina. The problem is, no one in that bureaucracy has ever been held accountable for that. I don't want to focus on looking back. The even greater problem is looking forward because that bureaucracy has not fundamentally changed.

I challenge my distinguished colleague, Senator DORGAN, to spend half as much time working with others to change the truly broken bureaucracy of the Corps of Engineers, spend half as much time as he has spent as a fierce, active, and vocal defender of that broken bureaucracy.

I am fighting for that change. I will continue to fight for that change. I will use every tool available to me as a Senator to do so. For instance, in the last WRDA bill, I worked very hard to craft language to include in the bill the Louisiana Water Resources Council, an outside peer review body, to bring outside, independent expertise and analysis to work with the corps on key projects following Hurricane Katrina. That was included in the 2007 WRDA bill. It passed into law. Do my colleagues know what the corps did to implement that? Nothing. Do they know how they acted to move that forward, an absolute, clear, statutory authorization from Congress? They did nothing. They said they are not going to do it.

Finally, I got them to change their tune. Finally, they are committed to beginning to move forward 3 years later, but I had to get their attention through this scenario.

Unfortunately, that is not the only item on which they have ignored mandates from Congress and ignored pressing needs all around the country, including my part of the country. I tried to pinpoint specific items where they were not living up to their mandate or to Congress's direction. I could have listed dozens. Instead, I focused on nine specific items. I worked closely with the corps, had several meetings discussing those items in an abundance of trying to work with them toward reso-

lution. After that, I focused on three of the nine, rather than all nine. I laid out why they did have the authority to move forward in some positive way on all that. I am going to continue to do so until we get real, positive change at the corps and real, positive progress on these important issues.

The Senator's main argument, apparently spoon-fed by the corps, is that the corps has no authority to do anything in these areas, no authorization language from Congress. That is flat wrong. Again, before the distinguished Senator simply accepts every little e-mail, every little memo the corps feeds him, perhaps he should consider the source of that information. If the corps was always right, New Orleans would have never flooded. If everything the corps said was good and true and gospel, we would never have had those billions of dollars of damage in terms of the catastrophic flooding of New Orleans caused solely by breaches in canals which were design flaws of the Corps of Engineers.

Let me go through a few specifics and explain—I have done this with the corps over and over—the authority they do have. One of my top concerns—

Mr. DORGAN. Will the Senator yield?

Mr. VITTER. I will yield when I am through. One of my top concerns is the critical outfall canals in New Orleans. It was the breaches in those canals that led to 80 percent of the catastrophic flooding of New Orleans. It was those breaches that were caused by design flaws of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. All I am asking under this category is that the corps do a risk/cost analysis of the different options they have identified in terms of fixing the outfall canals.

The reason I am concerned about the path they are moving down, which is their option 1, is that I truly believe it is much less safe and much less robust than their identified option 2. It is not only I who believes that. It is the corps who admits it. In the corps' report to Congress, which we mandated, the corps itself said: Option 2—that is the option they are rejecting—is generally more technically advantageous and may be more effective operationally over option 1 because it would have greater reliability and further reduces the risk of flooding.

In addition, Chris Accardo, the corps' chief of operations in New Orleans, said he is in favor of option 2 over option 1, absolutely.

In light of that, all I am asking, with the rest of the Louisiana delegation, with all the affected communities in southeast Louisiana, is that the corps perform a risk/cost analysis comparing these different options before they forge ahead building the option they themselves admit is less safe, less dependable.

It is also important to note that the corps clearly has authorization from Congress to do this study. General Van Antwerp, in my office, clearly said

they do. They have authorization. They have authority. They can do the study. They are not going to do it. Why don't we compare these options, the relative risk and the relative cost, before the Corps of Engineers plunges ahead to build the option they themselves say is less secure and less safe?

The second key issue I have focused on in my letters to the corps is the mandated AGMAC project, including the buildup of protection banks in Vermilion Parish to give that parish greater protection from storm surge. They were devastated during Hurricane Rita, in particular, and also in significant events since then. Again, the corps has authority to do this project. This project is in the WRDA bill. The corps says: We have busted our spending limits. We have explained to them various ways they can solve that problem by using O&M funds, exactly as they have used O&M funds for bank buildup in the MRGO project. We have given them another route, to use the CWPPRA program in conjunction with the WRDA-mandated project. The corps' response has been pretty simple. Its response has been: No, we don't want to do it.

Third and finally, the other big concern I have highlighted and the most obvious case of the Corps of Engineers ignoring the mandate of Congress, not having authorization, actively ignoring the mandate of Congress, is the critical Morganza to the gulf flood protection project. That project was initiated in 1992, 18 years ago. Senator DORGAN, the distinguished Senator from North Dakota, wants to say that the corps has no authority in this area. This project was included in three different water resources bills, once, then twice, and then a third time. Every step of the way, the corps has come up with excuses why they cannot move forward. Under their present plan, they are re-studying the project, and that restudy is due in December 2012. There is one little problem with that. That will be after the next water resources bill, which we hope to pass in 2011. All the people of LaFourche and Terrebonne Parishes who are going without adequate protection, who are in danger every additional hurricane season, having missed three WRDA trains because of the foot-dragging of the corps, now under the corps' present plan, they will miss a fourth.

We wish to talk about authorization from Congress. Is specific, full construction authorization in three WRDA bills not good enough? If that is not good enough, I don't know how to meet the corps' criteria.

If those three particular concerns are not enough, we can expand the list. In an attempt to work with the corps, in an attempt to find resolution, I have narrowed the list. I have tried to compromise. I have offered to meet with them. I am offering to meet with them again, as I have done consistently throughout the process. But if narrowing the list is going to be held